

NUCLEAR WEAPONS THREATEN WORLD SECURITY

On March 5, 1970, as a signatory of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the United States committed itself along with other nuclear nations to pursue complete nuclear disarmament "at an early date." What has happened to this commitment? The U.S. has done very little about it in the past 30 years. In fact, we have more nuclear weapons now than we had in 1970. Both the U.S. and Russia still possess thousands of these weapons pointed at each other, maintained at Cold War levels of hair-trigger alert. In 1995, Russia mistakenly identified a scientific rocket as a nuclear missile moving toward Moscow. The Russians came within minutes of launching their nuclear missiles at U.S. cities. Since then the continuing deterioration of Russian nuclear systems have only increased this danger. Keeping thousands of nuclear missiles on hair-trigger alert is an accident waiting to happen. The chance of a nuclear war starting by mistake or miscalculation between Russia and the United States is simply too great for us to ignore and not do anything about trying to prevent it from happening.

The first and most urgent thing for all of us to do about this is to participate in the National Call-In Days to President Bush on February 5 and 6, demanding that he place an immediate priority on getting all U.S. and Russian nuclear missiles taken off hair-trigger alert as soon as possible. By de-alerting their nuclear arsenals, the United States and Russia would create a standard of safety that very likely will make it taboo for any country to place its nuclear weapons on hair-trigger status. This also would eliminate the need for spending an estimated over \$59 billion on a national missile defense system that would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and that could not provide much protection if a flood of hair-trigger alert nuclear missiles were released accidentally or intentionally.

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Because of the growing realization by Russian officials that they can not safely maintain and adequately manage their vast nuclear weapons system, they have ratified the START 2 treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and now Russian President Vladimir Putin has called for dramatic new cuts in the number of Russian and U.S. nuclear weapons, even beyond the levels agreed to in principle in START 3. They have indicated that they need help in decommissioning and dismantling these deadly weapons of mass destruction.

Instead of upgrading and producing more destructive nuclear weapons, the appropriate function of the Y-12 Plant would be to do this desperately needed work of safely dismantling our nuclear weapons and those of other nations, such as Russia, disposal of the bomb materials, and safe storage of highly enriched uranium until it can be downblended. Then it could be proudly and appropriately be named "Y-12 World Security Complex." As long as it continues to upgrade and produce nuclear weapons, it deserves to be renamed "Y-12 National Insecurity Complex."

Both former President Jimmy Carter and General Lee Butler, who was the head of NATO's nuclear forces until he retired in 1994, have called for steps to abolish nuclear weapons. Can our political leaders and we, the people of this country, be humble enough to admit that the continued upgrading and production of nuclear weapons is unconscionable, that they threaten the security of everyone in the world, and that, therefore, they must be eliminated? If the United States will take the lead in offering to open its production facilities and stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction to international inspection and dismantlement, provided that other nations will agree to do likewise, I believe the consequence would be the removing of the terrible burden of an iron cross from the backs of the peoples of the world and that it would lead to a new birth of freedom, trust, and security for everyone.

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Comment No. 1

Issue Code: 16

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has significantly reduced the size of its nuclear weapons stockpile, and DOE has dismantled more than 15,000 nuclear weapons. At the present time, the United States is further downsizing its deployed nuclear weapons stockpile consistent with the terms of START I and START II. Although Russia suspended its nuclear weapons dismantlement actions on January 20, 2001, DOE has continued weapons dismantlement activities. While future arms control reductions may change requirements for maintaining the weapons stockpile, DOE is responsible for meeting the current requirements set forth by the President and Congress. The need for nuclear weapons and the issue of how many nuclear weapons the United States maintains as a nuclear deterrent are beyond the scope of the Y-12 SWEIS.

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In addition, when we consider the billions upon billions of dollars and the resources that are wasted on maintaining nuclear weapons capability and other weapons for mass destruction, suffering, and grief that could have been used for meeting real human and environmental needs, how can we honestly justify what we have been doing? With an equivalent investment, many times more people could be employed in meeting those needs than are currently working in weapons-related employment. In terms of our past stewardship in this matter alone, how can we ever presume that God should bless our nation?

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Let us all tell President Bush and our Senators and Representatives, "NO," a million times, "NO!" "Continued upgrading and production of nuclear weapons is unacceptable, unnecessary, and unconscionable. Fulfill the commitment to pursue complete nuclear disarmament that was made by our government in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty thirty years ago."

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(cont.)

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Comment No. 2

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DOE is responsible for meeting the current requirements of the Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Memorandum set forth by the President and Congress. The need for nuclear weapons and alternative uses of the Nation's funds are beyond the scope of the Y-12 SWEIS.